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BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS FREDERICK COUNTY, MARYLAND

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September 12, 2012

Dr. Theresa Alban, Superintendent Frederick County Board of Education 191 South East Street Frederick, Maryland 21701

Dear Dr. Alban and Elected Members of the Board of Education:

I have reviewed the 2012 Superintendant's Recommended Educational Facilities Master Plan (EFMP) and as the President of the Frederick County Board of Commissioners, we have great concerns. The aggressive nature of the project schedule seems unattainable in this economic climate. Our Finance Division has reviewed the plan and has the same concerns.

The plan schedules the initial phases of two Urbana elementary school projects in fiscal year 2014. The County Capital Improvements Program for fiscal years 2013 - 2018 schedules the initial phase of these projects in fiscal year 2015. This requires additional County funding of \$6,143,000, as the replacement project for North Frederick Elementary School and the renovation of Frederick High School remain in the plan for fiscal year 2014. In fiscal years 2015 through 2019, the EFMP requests other projects to move higher in construction priority as well.

The EFMP details the \$122,245,000 of funding requests that will be made to the State for the various projects. At this time, the County awaits State reimbursement of \$23,000,000 for the forward funding school construction. Given the State's fiscal constraints and the need to close the State's remaining structural deficit, there are no guarantees that the school construction funding will be forthcoming any time soon.

The County has lost significant State aid since fiscal 2010 as various programs have been cut and costs have been shifted to the counties. The deepest reductions in actual aid have occurred to local roads and bridges, law enforcement, health departments and detention facilitates. On top of these reductions, the State began a shift of the teacher pension costs and the counties are now struggling with the fiscal demands of the newest State mandate regarding storm water management.

This Board of County Commissioners remains committed to realistic aggressive school construction however, I am concerned that the EFMP does not take into account the continued weak economic climate and outlook. The County has evidenced this commitment by increasing the funding for systemic projects by \$5,000,000 in fiscal years 2014 and beyond. At this time, Frederick County is on track to construct around 600 new homes. The impact fees for this construction and revenues from the newly adopted school mitigation fee will not come close to the funding required for the overly aggressive project schedule proposed.

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The Board of County Commissioners stands to receive a great deal of unfair and unnecessary criticism from the citizens of the County when they cannot fund the commitments of such an unrealistic overly aggressive plan. I encourage you and your elected Board of Education members to revisit the EFMP and formulate a project schedule that is realistic given the County budget and the economic times within which we all live.

Sincerely,

BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS OF FREDERICK COUNTY, MARYLAND

By:

Blaine R. Young, President

BRY/ds

cc: Board of Education

Board of County Commissioners David B. Dunn, County Manager Lori Depies, Director, Finance Division

Joyce M. Grossnickle, Administrative Officer, Office of the County Manager